

WELCOME TO THE AIR FORCE RESERVE

A Research Paper

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by

Major Franklin J. Dolcater
Major Gregory L. Hataway
Major Calhoun S. Hodges
Major Susan D. Morgan
Major Robert B. Rossow

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Abstract

This project's focus was to update an existing information ToolBook on the Air Force Reserve. The word "ToolBook" is used in a generic sense to identify a software project since the update was done in hyper text markup language (HTML). This project was selected for update because of its relevance to the curriculum taught at Air Command and Staff College (ACSC). The Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) has taken on a greater role in day-to-day Air Force operations than ever before. In fact, the Reserves are now performing what used to be active duty only missions. Yet, many active duty personnel do not understand how the Air Force Reserve is structured or what contribution is made to the overall (Total Force) effort. A basic understanding of Reserve operations by active duty personnel is crucial if the Reserves are to be seamlessly integrated into daily Air Force operations. The question then becomes, "Using HTML, how can we best inform our selected target audience (ACSC faculty and students) on the basic history, structure, mission and concerns of the Air Force Reserve?" The primary audience of ACSC faculty and students was selected to limit the scope of the project and make it manageable. This audience represents a group of individuals with tremendous potential impact on the rest of the Air Force. This is especially true since they will either be our future leaders or have the potential to influence them. As HTML can be integrated into the World Wide Web, the product is easily loaded to the ACSC Bulletin Board for world

wide access. This product can also be incorporated into the distance learning (CD-ROM) curriculum for those students taking ACSC by correspondence or seminar.

One primary assumption was made in planning for the ToolBook update. It was assumed a small number of ACSC faculty and students (both in-residence and distance learning) come in contact with Air Force Reservists frequently enough to understand what the Air Force Reserve contributes to the Total Force and to daily operations. The Air Force Reserve has traditionally trained to augment the active duty forces in wartime. This activity is still the primary reason the Reserves exist, but the role the Reserves play in day-to-day Air Force activities has shifted significantly due to manpower shortages caused by the drawdown in active duty forces. Two examples of new missions for the Air Force Reserve are highlighted by the first reserve Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) unit and a new combat camera unit. Especially noteworthy is our contribution toward the Bosnian (peace effort) operation. These are only two examples of the new missions for the Reserves. Also, since 1990, the Reserves have been involved in almost 30 contingencies, triple the number it experienced in the first 40 years of its existence. In spite of all this activity, there are many on active duty who still view the Reserves in the old “Weekend Warrior” image and do not understand what contributions the Reserves make to the Air Force mission. A thorough understanding and appreciation of Reserve contributions and concerns can only serve to facilitate a better rapport between active and Reserve forces.

The original ToolBook was gutted and a new format and structure were formed. The ToolBook was broken down into four major sections: (1) History and Evolution, (2) Structure and Organization, (3) Current Operations (Roles and Missions) and (4) Special

Topics which includes mobilization issues and concerns of traditional reservists (employer/employee issues). The ToolBook was also modified to include introductory and transitional paragraphs for each section plus a standardized method of going from page to page in the ToolBook. A help file was added to assist the reader with the navigation of the ToolBook and instructional icons or phrases were added to almost every page to make the product as user friendly as possible. “Hot words” are scattered throughout the ToolBook to provide access to additional information to enhance the reader’s understanding of the Air Force Reserve without interrupting the information flow of the basic product. (A “hot word” is a link that, when activated, takes the reader to another source of information in the ToolBook). Short film clips on several Reserve topics are available throughout the ToolBook. An appendix was also added that includes: (1) aircraft specifications for aircraft the Reserves currently fly, (2) definitions and abbreviations for clarity, (3) chronological historical data, (4) the bibliography, (5) a help file with navigation instructions, and (6) the credits.

The History and Evolution section describes the early years of the militia and relevant public law prior to World War II and then discusses the formation of the Air Force Reserve in 1948. A discussion of the issues of the 1960s follows including the inception of the Total Force concept and the implementation of the Associate Wing program in the Military Airlift Command. This section continues with a discussion of the final evolution of Total Force policy along with a brief description of newly acquired Reserve missions and deployment operations. A discussion of the issues of the 1990s follows with the final point highlighting the February 1997 redesignation of the Air Force Reserve from a field operating agency to a major command. Several examples of reserve

involvement in contingencies were also added as “hot links” along with a link to the chronological data in the appendix. Photographs or drawings were used where possible to add emphasis to the text.

The Structure and Organization section starts with the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) mission statement and proceeds to discuss the functions and missions of the various headquarters and the Air Reserve Personnel Center. A brief discussion of the various Reserve categories follows along with a description of training in the reserves. The role of air reserve technician (ART) personnel is discussed and is followed by a description of the individual mobilization augmentee (IMA) program. Then, the associate program is described and the flying units in the command are listed. This section closes with a listing of statistics on experience factors and total manpower availability.

Current Operations--Roles and Missions discusses almost every aspect of Reserve involvement in contingencies and contributions to the Total Force. This area of the ToolBook discusses the importance of training and then covers the flying missions of all Air Force Reserve aircraft. Support operations are then discussed which highlight the contributions of a broad cross section of Reserve specialties in humanitarian missions, nation assistance, and crisis intervention. This section goes on to discuss worldwide/theater support operations conducted by Air Force Reserve forces. Special emphasis is given to Bosnian flying and ground support operations to emphasize the high operations tempo facing the Reserves today. Finally, we close with an examination of possible future missions for the Air Force Reserve. The entire section makes use of photographs to support the written material. Hot links are used extensively to enable the reader to

view fact sheets on all aircraft flown by the Air Force Reserve (except the HC-130 for which no fact sheet was available).

The final section in the ToolBook covers special topics. The first discussion centers on recruiting programs and the basic rules that govern each one. Participation concerns are addressed in the retention area and is followed by a description of Reserve retirement eligibility rules and benefits. The mobilization area covers a brief background of why mobilization exists, the planning that goes into the mobilization process, how units and individual personnel are activated, and how they are deactivated. The last issue covered in this section (and the ToolBook) are employer/employee issues. The role of The National Committee for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (NCESGR) is discussed. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The conclusion closes out the ToolBook by summarizing key thoughts and facts.

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